



MANITOU SPRINGS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROJECT

A partnership of the City of Manitou Springs, School District 14 and the Manitou Springs Restorative Justice Council

OFFENDER ACCOUNTABILITY VICTIM RESTORATION COMMUNITY SAFETY

When a wrong occurs conventional justice asks:

"What law was broken? Who did it? How shall they be punished?"

Restorative justice asks:

"What harm was done? Who's responsible? How can it be made right?"

How Restorative Justice Works

In the aftermath of an offense, restorative justice seeks to enable the victim, offender, and affected members of the community to voluntarily repair the harm.

The offender must admit his (or her) responsibility. The parties meet in a safe setting with a trained facilitator. Without any personal attacks, the parties tell how the offense affected them. They agree by consensus on what needs to be done to make things as right as reasonably possible. The agreement is reduced to writing. If the offender does not agree or fails to complete the agreement, the case is handled by the conventional justice system.

Benefits of Restorative Justice

A restorative justice process gives victims a voice in the justice process; holds offenders accountable for their actions; focuses on repairing the harm to victims, community and the offender; reduces school expulsions and discipline problems; reduces offender re-contact with police.

For more information contact

Manitou Springs Restorative Justice Council - 606 Manitou Avenue, Manitou Springs, CO 80829 - (719) 685-2551

-- ANSWERS TO OFTEN ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE --

What does restorative justice mean?

- * Restorative Justice (RJ) is the name given to mediation and conferencing practices in appropriate criminal cases.
- * RJ is a positive and supportive process which includes the victim and their families.

Can restorative justice be used for all non violent crimes?

- * RJ can be a meaningful and rehabilitative meeting for the appropriate defendant.
- * RJ requires that defendants who participate try to learn from their mistakes.
- * RJ can work well for property crimes, crimes where the victim needs answers to relieve fear or anxiety or closure, cases where restitution needs to be determined, cases that have civil law aspects, and crimes of first-time or younger offenders.
- * RJ is a collaborative approach to criminal cases to allow the victim and his/her family to be heard.

Who will facilitate the Community Conference?

- * RJ requires that the facilitators be highly trained and sensitive to the needs of victims- knowing they need to be empowered in our system of justice and not re-victimized.

Isn't restorative justice another way of being "soft on crime?"

- * RJ is real justice for all involved and is not being soft on crime.

The Differences

Conventional Criminal Justice

Process is compulsory
Blame fixing is central
Focus on the offender
Professional proxies are the key players
Victim's suffering and harm may not be heard
Offender responsibility is discouraged
Apology and remorse are discouraged
Offender competencies are not addressed
Probability of failure to "correct" is great

Restorative Justice

Process is voluntary
Problem solving is central
Focus is on victim, community, and offender
Victim and offender are the key players
Victim's suffering and harm is heard
Offender responsibility is required
Apology and remorse are encouraged
Offender competencies are addressed
Probability of successful "correction" is great

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